



**CONTRA COSTA
WATER DISTRICT**

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July 22, 2005

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Paul Dabbs, Chief
Statewide Water Planning Branch
California Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

**Subject: Comments on Public Review Draft California Water Plan
Update 2005**

Dear Mr. Dabbs:

Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) appreciates this opportunity to provide comments on the Public Review Draft California Water Plan Update 2005 (Update 2005). CCWD has been actively engaged in development of Update 2005 through membership on the Public Advisory Committee as well as participation in work groups and technical meetings. Update 2005 represents a significant effort on the part of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for which DWR staff is to be commended. CCWD's comments here address Volume 1 - Strategic Plan.

Update 2005 Implementation. Update 2005 recognizes that water quality and water supply reliability are key challenges facing the State, and includes recommendations to address these challenges such as investing in water use efficiency and encouraging regions to develop diversified portfolios of water management tools. While both of these recommendations are important, neither is sufficient to improve water quality and water supply reliability to the levels required to protect public health, the economy and the environment. In particular, water quality protection and water supply reliability will require increased storage and other infrastructure improvements. Update 2005 needs to make a clear statement to this effect so that State Legislators and Administrators relying on Update 2005 to make water policy fully understand that there is no single solution to water quality and water supply reliability.

Regional Water Management. CCWD supports the focus on regional water strategies and integrated resource management as means of meeting future water needs. This reflects the trend in the water community that, with State support, can become more effective and pervasive. Acknowledging the

important role of regional water management, however, does not lessen the State's responsibility to ensure a sufficient supply of high quality water for all Californians. It is imperative that the State takes leadership on addressing inter-regional challenges and implementing inter-regional programs. In particular, the State needs to ensure the CALFED program is implemented in a balanced manner and that the resources are available to do so. Although Update 2005 reiterates the State's commitment to the CALFED program, there is no sense of the critical role the Delta plays in California's water system or the urgency surrounding the need to solve the challenges facing the Delta.

Funding Water System Improvements. Costs to implement the recommendations in Update 2005 would be in the billions. There is very little specific information provided on funding; indeed one of the recommendations calls for development of a realistic funding strategy. Neither is there any attempt to prioritize costs in light of limited funding. CCWD is concerned, however, about the proposal to implement water user fees to pay for regional programs or to assist water agencies in their local program. Water agencies would not support such a program except on a voluntary basis whereby benefits are clearly delineated.

CCWD appreciates the open and transparent process employed by DWR in developing Update 2005, and looks forward to continuing to work with DWR as the plan is finalized.

Sincerely,



Greg Gartrell
Assistant General Manager

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